

United States Marshals Service



FACT SHEET Asset Forfeiture Program

The Marshals Service administers the Department of Justice's Asset Forfeiture Program by managing and disposing of properties seized and forfeited by federal law enforcement agencies and U.S. attorneys nationwide. The program has become a key part of the federal government's efforts to combat major criminal activities. Currently, the Marshals Service manages more than \$964 million worth of property.

There are three goals of the Asset Forfeiture Program: stripping criminals of their ill-gotten gains; improving law enforcement cooperation; and enhancing law enforcement through equitable revenue sharing. Asset forfeiture is a law enforcement success story, and the Marshals Service plays a vital role.

In 1984, Congress passed the Comprehensive Crime Control Act, which gave federal prosecutors new forfeiture provisions with which to combat crime. Also created by this legislation was the Department of Justice Asset Forfeiture Fund (AFF). The proceeds from the sale of forfeited assets such as real property, vehicles, businesses, financial instruments, vessels, aircraft and jewelry are deposited into the AFF and are subsequently used to further law enforcement initiatives. Moreover, under the Equitable Sharing Program, the proceeds from sales are often shared with the state and local law enforcement agencies that participated in the investigation which led to the forfeiture of the assets. This important program enhances law enforcement cooperation between state/local agencies and federal agencies.

The Asset Forfeiture Program consists of: the Marshals Service; U.S. Attorneys Offices; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Drug Enforcement Administration; Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service; and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It is important to note that the Marshals Service participates with the U.S. Attorneys Offices and the investigative agencies in pre-seizure planning — the first critical step toward ensuring that sound, well-informed forfeiture decisions are made. The role of the Marshals Service is not only to serve as custodian of seized and forfeited property but also to provide information and assist prosecutors in making informed decisions about property that is targeted for forfeiture.

The Marshals Service manages and disposes of all assets seized for forfeiture by utilizing successful procedures employed by the private sector. The Marshals Service contracts with qualified vendors who minimize the amount of time an asset remains in inventory and maximize the net return to the government.

Note: The Marshals Service's National Sellers List (Item 319K) is available from the Federal Citizen Information Center, 1-888-878-3256, for one dollar. The same list can be downloaded or printed free of charge at www.usmarshals.gov/assets/nsi.html. The National Sellers List provides the same information contained in commercially marketed publications.

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